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## **U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress**

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Robert D. Critchlow  
National Defense Fellow  
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

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# U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress

## Summary

In August 16, 2004, President Bush announced a program of sweeping changes to the numbers and locations of military basing facilities at overseas locations, now known as the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS) or Global Posture Review, a component of ongoing force transformation efforts. Roughly 70,000 personnel would return from overseas locations from Europe and Asia to bases in the continental United States (CONUS). Other overseas forces would be redistributed within current host nations such as Germany and South Korea, and new bases would be established in nations of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa. In the Department of Defense's (DOD) view, these locations would be closer, and better able, to respond to potential trouble spots.

In August 2005, the congressionally mandated Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (also known as the "Overseas Basing Commission") formally reported its findings. It disagreed with the "timing and synchronization" of the DOD overseas re-basing initiative, and questioned whether a strategic vision agreed upon by all effected government agencies was guiding the re-basing. It also saw the initiative as potentially at odds with stresses on the force that the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan caused. The Commission questioned whether sufficient interagency coordination, such as State Department led basing rights negotiations, have occurred. It expressed doubts that the military had enough airlift and sealift to make the strategy work, and noted that DOD had likely underestimated the cost of all aspects associated with the moves (DOD budgeted \$4 billion, the Commission estimated \$20 billion). The Commission also expressed fear that the re-basing could harm military quality of life, which would in turn hamper recruiting and retention. DOD disagreed with much of the Commission's analysis. Meanwhile, advocacy groups have voiced concern about the DOD plan, arguing that it would harm long-standing alliance relationships. Other groups stated doubts about DOD planning to accommodate the thousands of troops who would be returning to the U.S. from overseas bases.

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission delivered its report recommending U.S. base closures to the President. The President has forwarded their recommendations unchanged to Congress. The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a study that Congress mandates DOD to accomplish every four years to allocate missions and guide military procurement, is planned to complete in early 2006. Critics argue that the BRAC plan and the QDR should have been finalized before completing the overseas basing plan.

Recent international diplomatic and security developments could further influence debate on overseas basing. Host nations such as South Korea have begun to voice limits on the use of forces based in their country. Uzbekistan, one of the test cases for the new strategy, recently evicted U.S. forces from the base in that Central Asian nation. Some analysts argue this eviction was prompted from Russia and China, who have begun to express concern with U.S. expansion of influence in the region. This report will be updated as necessary.

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# U.S. Military Overseas Basing: New Developments and Oversight Issues for Congress

## Introduction and Issues for Congress

On August 16, 2004, President Bush unveiled one of the most sweeping changes to the numbers and locations of military overseas basing facilities since the beginning of the Cold War. Announcing a plan that had been under study for approximately three years, the Department of Defense would move thousands of personnel from installations in Europe and Asia to bases within the United States. Simultaneously, the military would shift its approach away from huge bases such as Ramstein, which has all of the comforts of the U.S. — family housing, supermarkets, convenience stores, theaters, and so forth, to reliance on more austere facilities in Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East that would be less elaborate and lack most of these benefits. In 2004, the Congress chartered the Commission on the Review of Overseas Military Facility Structure of the United States (also known as the Overseas Basing Commission) to provide an independent assessment of the DOD overseas basing needs.<sup>1</sup>

The DOD plan could prompt budget and oversight decisions for Congress. These might include approval, modification, or rejection of the DOD proposal. Congress could also have to consider appropriations requests for construction of infrastructure at new overseas or expanded continental United States (CONUS) locations, as well as fund increased impact aid to local communities. Congress would have to oversee new acquisition programs for mobility and logistics capabilities (such as airlift) needed for the strategy. Congress would need to ensure the plan will be executable given the results of the current round of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Finally, Congress would have to consider

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<sup>1</sup> FY2004 Military Construction Appropriations Act (H.R. 2559/P.L. 108-132 of November 22, 2003), sec. 128. This Commission was chartered to make a “thorough study of matters relating to the military facility structure of the United States overseas.” This study would also consider issues pertaining to overseas military construction and facilities, host nation support payments, training ranges, and opportunities to close or realign overseas bases. It was specifically chartered to provide “a proposal ... for an overseas basing strategy for the Department of Defense,” see House of Representatives, Conference Report on H.R. 2559 (H.Rept. 108-342), *Making Appropriations for Military Construction, Family Housing, and Base Realignment and Closure for the Department of Defense for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2004, and for Other Purposes*, November 4, 2003; for historical perspective on the debates that drove the chartering of the Overseas Basing Commission, see CRS Report RL32310, “Appropriations for FY2005: Military Construction,” by Daniel H. Else, November 15, 2005.

ratification of new or revised treaties, such as status of forces agreements, to support the United States relationship with new basing partners.

## Background

### The Department of Defense Strategy

The Department of Defense Global Posture Review, also known as the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS), is intended to reduce United States overseas forces over a six-to-eight-year period from the numbers and locations of overseas bases (basing “posture”) left over from the Cold War<sup>2</sup> to new locations optimized to support current allies and confront new potential threats.<sup>3</sup> Overall, U.S. installations overseas would decline from 850 to 550. Roughly 70,000 personnel, mostly from the Army, would return to the U.S. The Congressional Budget Office projects the potential cost of this relocation effort at \$7 billion, but with a potential savings payoff of \$1 billion per year if the number of U.S. troops overseas was reduced to a minimum number needed to receive and host deployments.<sup>4</sup>

The Defense Department plan envisions three tiers of bases. It would retain some of the large “main operating bases,” such as Ramstein AFB in Germany, which have all of the comforts of the U.S. — family housing, schools, supermarkets, convenience stores, theaters, and populations in the tens of thousands.<sup>5</sup> Further, the military would establish an overseas network of “forward operating sites,” which are more austere installations, lacking the conveniences and hosting smaller numbers of personnel. Military personnel would deploy to these bases for temporary duty (typically one year or less, unaccompanied by families), in contrast to the permanent change of station moves in which an entire family moves to a new base for two or more years. Lastly, minimalist “cooperative security locations,” would likely be run by host nation personnel and would not host U.S. forces on a day-to-day basis. These

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<sup>2</sup> During the Cold War, U.S. troops were positioned to stop an invasion by tanks and aircraft of the U.S.S.R. and Warsaw pact from Eastern Europe into Western Germany. This required an extensive infrastructure of bases, runways, and training areas to support large numbers of conventional forces. The U.S. also maintained large forces in Japan and South Korea, both to deter the Soviets in Asia and to support security guarantees to the South Koreans, where to date a formal peace treaty ending the 1951-53 war with North Korea does not exist.

<sup>3</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Secretary of Defense Annual Report to the Congress and the President*, (Department of Defense, 2004), 60.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Mazzetti, “U.S. to Cut Number of Overseas Bases,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 2005; “U.S. to Close 35 Percent of Overseas Bases,” *New York Times on the Web*, September 23, 2004; Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Changing the Army’s Overseas Basing*, May 2004.

<sup>5</sup> For comparison, Ramstein AB in Germany has 14,300 military permanent party personnel as of May 2005, see “Guide to Air Force Installations Worldwide,” *Air Force Magazine* 88, no. 5, (May 2005): pg. 136.

locations would be used in the event of a crisis to give U.S. forces access to the region. They would also allow U.S. forces to train with local allies and participate in cooperative activities, such as disaster relief or peacekeeping, which can improve military-to-military ties.<sup>6</sup> U.S. forces would also rely heavily on off-shore pre-positioning and sea basing to provide logistical support.<sup>7</sup>

The biggest changes would happen in Europe, where the military would shutter nearly 200 facilities and draw down roughly 40,000 troops from 105,570 as of June 2005.<sup>8</sup> Some of the forces remaining in Europe would periodically deploy from bases in Germany for temporary duty to locations in Romania, Bulgaria, or Central Asia. Both Romania and Bulgaria are energetically campaigning to win U.S. bases, however, specific negotiations to secure rights to base in some of these new locations are not complete. Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, Eagle Base in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Manas Air Field in Kyrgestan typify the new approach. While representing a full time U.S. presence, these bases would lack the elaborate infrastructure of the major installations that evolved in western Europe. The buildings consist of Quonset huts or pole buildings, and in some cases are still tent cities. The troops are not accompanied by their families. Overall, the focus of military efforts would shift south and east, closer to current Middle-Eastern hot-spots.<sup>9</sup>

For Asia, the plan advocates consolidating bases in South Korea, with a drawdown of nearly 12,500 personnel (from a strength of 32,744 troops in June 2005),<sup>10</sup> and move headquarters for remaining units out of expensive Seoul real estate to locations further south. Adjustments are also envisioned for troop dispositions in Japan, with an interim agreement proposing to move 7,000 of the 15,000 Marines

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<sup>6</sup> "U.S. to Close 35 Percent of Overseas Bases," *New York Times on the Web*, September 23, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Maritime prepositioning uses a fleet of cargo ships preloaded with supplies and equipment located near potential trouble spots. Prepositioning this material reduces the time required for a military unit and its equipment to deploy to a combat area. The best known example is stationed near the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. See CRS Report RL32513, "Navy-Marine Corps Amphibious and Maritime Prepositioning Ship Programs, Background and Oversight Issues for Congress," by Ronald O'Rourke, August 2, 2005 for more information.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Defense, "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country," June 30 2005, [<http://www.dior.whs.mil/mmid/military/history/hst0605.pdf>]

<sup>9</sup> Vince Crawley, "Pentagon Gives Congress Plan for Overseas Basing," *Air Force Times*, October 11, 2004, p. 12; Vince Crawley, "European Chief Considers Using Existing, Austere Bases," *Army Times*, January 17, 2005, p. 23; Ann Scott Tyson, "New U.S. Strategy: 'Lily Pad' Bases," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 10 2004; Vince Crawley, "Closer to New Allies, Potential Trouble Spots," *Marine Corps Times*, June 6, 2005, p. 15; Vince Crawley, "Discussions Push for Bases in Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia," *Army Times*, May 16, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Defense, "Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths By Regional Area and By Country," June 30 2005, [<http://www.dior.whs.mil/mmid/military/history/hst0605.pdf>]; also note that the Korea moves began in 2004 and will continue through 2008, so over 5,000 of the 12,500 have already been moved.

currently on Okinawa to Guam.<sup>11</sup> Other U.S. forces in Asia could potentially deploy to the Philippines, Malaysia, or Singapore for exercises, training, and as-needed forward basing. Reliance on air and naval capability would increase in the Pacific given the vast distances in the region. The U.S. presence in Africa would likely expand.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. already has established Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Gabon, Ghana, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda, where the focus would be on training and cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

## Re-Basing Rationale

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld listed multiple reasons for reworking the overseas military basing dispositions. He argued that the current arrangements were “seriously obsolete,” oriented to deter and fight the large standing militaries of the Cold War rather than the current threats. However, he gave no geographic specifics on where he viewed the new threats as residing. He stated that updating the military’s global posture was part of the Department’s larger transformation effort, but his comments did not clarify how the transformational goals such as speed or precision (in his words, to “do more with less”) drove the overseas basing strategy decisions. He claimed that relocating personnel and facilities in some cases could reduce frictions with host governments and enhance cooperation with allies. Yet, he also indicated that nations that imposed restrictions or conditions on the use of U.S. forces from their territory would be viewed as less satisfactory locations.<sup>14</sup>

During his June 2005 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Military Construction Subcommittee, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Ryan Henry echoed many of Secretary Rumsfeld’s themes. He noted an increased reliance on pre-positioned equipment and forces that move to forward operating sites

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<sup>11</sup> Yoshio Okubo, “Moving U.S. Bases Splits Nation,” *Daily Yomiuri*, December 2, 2004; “Impatient U.S. Seeks June Talks on Bases,” *Financial Times*, March 12, 2005; Kuniichi Tanida, “Locals Up in Arms Over Deal That Leaves Combat Units Untouched,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, October 31, 2005. Reports indicate the U.S. proposing to move the 1<sup>st</sup> Army headquarters to Camp Zama, near Tokyo, from Washington state in the U.S., to reposition the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force headquarters from Tokyo to Guam, and to relocate some Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

<sup>12</sup> Kurt M. Campbell and Celeste Johnson Ward, “New Battle Stations?” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 2 (September/October 2003): 95-103; Robert L. Maginnis, “Calling Troops Home,” *Washington Times*, August 14, 2005, p. B05; Andrew Krepinevich, “The New Pax Americana: Restructure Base Strategy, Defense Program,” *Defense News*, September 20 2004, p. 28; John T. Bennett, “DOD in Talks with South, West African Nations About Basing Rights,” *Inside the Pentagon*, October 21 2004; Andrew Koch, “U.S. Basing Plans in Africa Gain Clarity,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly*, June 1, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> CRS Report RL32758, “U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Columbia,” by Andrew Feickert, August 26, 2005, includes detailed discussion of some of the recent U.S. military initiatives in Africa.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Defense, “Global Posture,” Testimony as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Senate Armed Services Committee, September 23, 2004, [<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2004/sp20040923-secdef0783.html>].



on a temporary basis, but did not explain the anticipated mix between these forces and permanently stationed forces, or what the department would need for airlift and sealift to sustain this approach. He also suggested that the new strategy would improve military families' quality of life because they would experience fewer disruptive overseas moves, and the military member would have a more predictable deployment schedule. However, the strategy's reliance on more frequent short deployments which would drive family separations would seem to some to contradict this assertion.<sup>15</sup>

Deputy Undersecretary Henry also highlighted the linkage with this year's BRAC round and the current QDR study, scheduled to be released in February 2006.<sup>16</sup> However, it would seem advantageous for the strategic vision to be encapsulated in the first QDR performed after 9/11 and, arguably, should precede a realignment of global basing structure, rather than trail it by over a year. Likewise, since many of the overseas personnel are projected to return to the U.S., knowledge of the bases that would be available stateside after the Congress approves the BRAC Commission findings would be a logical precursor to bringing troops back from foreign installations. It is unclear what factors are driving the decision making process, but it is logical that basing arrangements optimized for Cold War adversaries may not be suitable to counter current threats.

## **The Overseas Basing Commission**

### **Commission Report Findings**

On August 15, 2005, the congressionally chartered Overseas Basing Commission released its final report. The Commission visited with senior military leaders, defense analysts, and senior officials from other government agencies, and traveled extensively to bases on site visits. In general, the report was critical of the DOD's overseas restructuring process and proposal.<sup>17</sup>

There were, however, several areas in which the Commission's report concurred with DOD. It lauded the ongoing concept of transforming of the military from a Cold War structure to meet new requirements. It agreed that the shifting of forces in South Korea and the return of most Army heavy forces from Central Europe was appropriate. It also supported the concepts of forward operating sites and cooperative security locations. The Commission agreed that these arrangements would give more options in a crisis and more opportunities to work with new allies, thus expanding

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<sup>15</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Appropriations Committee, Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, "Statement by Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense," June 28, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> "Statement by Ryan Henry," June 28, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> "New Report on Overseas Basing Plans Remains Critical of Pace, Timing," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005; U.S. Congress, Senate, Appropriations Committee, Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, "Opening Statement of Al Cornella, Chairman, Overseas Basing Commission," June 28, 2005.

positive U.S. influence. However, the report's major finding held that "the timing and synchronization of the global re-basing initiatives must be rethought."<sup>18</sup>

Chairman Cornella argued that DOD's plan overemphasized a purely military perspective, and neglected to more fully reflect the concerns of all members of the national security interagency community. For example, State Department concerns about opportunities to enhance alliance relationships through exercises and exchanges and to exert political and diplomatic influence in the regions under review were allegedly given inadequate attention. The Commission believed the desire to implement base withdrawals quickly, rather than specific strategic decisions and coordination, seemed to be driving the selections. Further, the report held that the locations were picked based on today's threats rather than a long term view of the anticipated threat. It expressed concern that the plan disregards the politics and values of some of the new potential allies, which might not dovetail with U.S. interests.<sup>19</sup>

The report questioned the timing of the moves in a environment of fast-paced current military operations. The Commission expressed concern that the strain of conducting this sweeping series of moves, while also conducting major conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan has the potential to threaten the capability of the force. Forces would either be preparing to deploy, deployed, or returning from deployment, while also trying to reestablish their unit's support structure, military personnel, and families at new bases. Further, it viewed the pace of the aggressive time line proposed by DOD, projected as 2006 through 2011, as being overly ambitious.<sup>20</sup>

The Commission noted that mobility and material prepositioning were key to the success of the re-basing strategy. However, it expressed concern that current and projected strategic airlift and strategic sealift were inadequate for the Defense Department's concept, which relies heavily on transporting troops to crisis areas rather than forward basing. It also held that sufficient prepositioned supply stocks do not now exist. Most importantly, it argued that future budget plans for projected mobility requirements did not account for the re-basing plan's needs.<sup>21</sup>

The report strongly highlighted claims that the re-basing plan would harm the quality of life of volunteer military personnel. It noted that the military has insufficient plans to ensure both that required support facilities at U.S. bases gaining personnel are in place for new personnel by the first day they arrive, and that facilities

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<sup>18</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing Structure of the United States, "Report to the President and the Congress," August 15, 2005, p. I-xii, [<http://obc.gov/documents>].

<sup>19</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. ix, 4-11.

<sup>20</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. ix-x, 11-16.

<sup>21</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. x,16-20. The Congressional Budget Office recently completed a study comparing strategic mobility alternatives, including an examination of new types of systems like heavy lift airships (blimps). See Congressional Budget Office, *Options for Strategic Military Transportation Systems*, September 2005.

are preserved at the losing base overseas until the last person is gone. These support facilities include commissaries, exchanges, hospitals, and child care capacity on base and off base support capability provided by the local and state communities such as schools and housing. Without this support, young military families with limited incomes may suffer in areas of spouse employment, family health, and cost of living. The Commission also argues that the heightened tempo of temporary overseas rotations that is central to the plan will result in frequent family separations over the course of a career that could threaten retention and recruiting. The decision to stay in the service is very much a family decision, and when many child growth milestones are missed, or a spouse experiences enough home emergencies and worry while the military member is deployed away overseas, the balance can tip to separation from the military.<sup>22</sup>

Significantly, the report contended that the DOD might have underestimated the total cost to implement their base realignment process. The Commission's independent analysis calculated a \$20 billion bill for the moves, while the DOD has only budgeted \$4 billion through 2011. The danger is that the services will need to spend from their operations and maintenance budget accounts (which should normally be used to buy day-to-day material such as expendable equipment, fuel, or ammunition) to cover the difference. This could result in potential damage to force readiness, given the budget demands caused by combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

The Commission, given what it viewed as inadequate interagency, budgetary, strategic mobility, and quality of life planning, recommended a slowing and reordering of the pace of activity associated with overseas re-basing. It noted that the acquisition of key capabilities, such as mobility and prepositioned supplies, required to support the new strategy had not occurred. It also claimed that the budget support for establishing forces at new locations (mainly back in the U.S.), such as funding for the movement of people and equipment and any new building at these locations was lacking. Further, preparatory activities needed for local communities to absorb thousands of new military families, such as support for additional schools and roads, were absent.<sup>24</sup>

In general, the Commission held that a coherent national strategy did not sufficiently guide the overseas posture review and that a formal national debate on the larger scope of American security post-Cold War should precede the re-basing moves. It argued that completion of the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission report, and the Mobility Capabilities Study<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. x-xi, 20-25.

<sup>23</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xi, 25-29.

<sup>24</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xi-xii, 29-32.

<sup>25</sup> The Mobility Capabilities Study is a Department of Defense project to analyze how much airlift and sealift will be required for the future. It relies on computer modeling of multiple deployment scenarios to determine how much capacity will be needed. In turn, that data will be used to guide procurement programs for new airlift aircraft, air refueling aircraft, fast  
(continued...)

were key to providing an overall architecture for a updating of our overseas posture. The Commission strongly recommended diligent Congressional oversight of this process to ensure a cohesive basing strategy.<sup>26</sup>

## Responses to the Commission Report

The Defense Department responded to the Commission's report upon its release in May 2005. Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Policy Ryan Henry and Acting Under Secretary of the Army Ray Dubois met with the press and delivered specific counterpoints to many of the report's findings. Mr. Henry rebutted the Commission's critique of the DOD choices for strategic dispositions. Where the Commission viewed the DOD selections as based on today's threats, he asserted that the concept strove to base the forces in locations that supported flexibility and speed of response to anywhere in an unpredictable environment.<sup>27</sup> Critics contend, however, to simply assert that future threats are unpredictable sidesteps the challenge of articulating a strategic vision, which includes a projection of anticipated threats.

Mr. Henry also took issue with the Commission's argument that DOD had not sufficiently coordinated the Global Posture Review across government agencies. He cited meetings with the regional combatant commanders that began shortly after the 2001 QDR, as well as consultation with the Department of State, the National Security Council, and 45 briefings to capitol hill staffers and members of Congress. His view was that Congress had indicated satisfaction with the amount of oversight consultation to this point. He also highlighted visits to the government leadership in over 20 foreign countries that could be affected by the moves. While he noted the number of meetings, he did not indicate whether the briefings were in- depth or ongoing, nor the state of progress, particularly regarding the delicate status of forces agreements that guide basing rules with the foreign countries. He stated that the Global Posture Review was intended to serve as a starting point to feed the 2005 QDR, as well as the 2005 BRAC and the Mobility Capability Study, all of which were to be coordinated in parallel. Therefore, it would fall to the QDR to address the timing of lift procurement and other needed acquisition to ensure it supports the Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS). However, since the QDR is intended to be the keystone document outlining DODs future strategic vision, selecting how the military will align its bases before determining the strategy they are trying to achieve raises questions of appropriate sequence.

Mr. Dubois disputed the Commission report's concerns that DOD was short-changing military families' quality of life. He noted that the department held discussions with the Department of Education, as well as state governors and leaders

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<sup>25</sup> (...continued)

sealift ships, and maritime prepositioning assets. See CRS Report RL32887, "Strategic Mobility Innovation: Options and Oversight Issues," by Jon D. Klaus, April 29, 2005 for an Overview of the Mobility Capabilities Study and options under consideration.

<sup>26</sup> Commission on Review of the Overseas Military Facility Basing, pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, "Defense Department Special Briefing," May 9, 2005, [<http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2005/tr20050509-2701.html>].

of communities that would be vital partners in supporting returning personnel and dependents. He did not, however, indicate if additional impact aid for these communities was planned for future budget requests. He also pointed out that the re-basing plan's decisions were incorporated into the BRAC analysis. However, given that the BRAC results have not been approved by Congress, it is left unclear which communities would have to prepare to host additional troops, and what the status of preparation was, even though moves from overseas were ready to start. He held that the re-basing would give other payoffs to improve quality of life; particularly that the number of family permanent changes of station (PCSs) would be fewer, thus reducing the turmoil of overseas moves. Although reducing the number of PCS moves may offer greater stability, it assumes that all military bases are of equal desirability in their geographical location and facilities, which is often not the case. DOD also appears to assume the overseas stationing in permanent European bases (such as Germany, Italy) are undesirable to military families, which is also often not the case. In fact, the opportunity to periodically live overseas is, for some, an advantage of a military career. Mr. Dubois also did not address, however, the stress that increased unaccompanied overseas deployments would place on families, or the troops deployed at isolated, "bare-bones" locations. Neither official addressed the potential impact on recruiting or retention.

Finally, Mr. Henry downplayed the disparity between the Defense Department's and the Commission's cost figures. He suggested that the Commission's study included costs that other programs in the defense budget covered, while DOD figures only focused on the additional costs driven specifically by the moves. Mr. Dubois also noted that the military would eventually accrue savings in operations and maintenance accounts as they drew down from maintaining expensive overseas locations. Yet even if these costs will be covered by other programs in the budget, there is no indication that the department has proposed an increase for those budget items, such as construction, airlift procurement, or sealift procurement, which are critical to make the new strategy work. Further, it is unclear that the compensation the U.S. would get from the new host nations would offset that currently received from established allies. Commonly, countries in which U.S. bases are located provide various forms of "host nation support." This could include services, construction, and even cash payments in recognition of the benefit to local economies. However, many of the new locations, such as Kyrgyzstan, are demanding payments from the U.S. to allow basing in their countries.

Reaction to the Pentagon's plan continued to emerge from beyond the Commission. Alliance relationships formed one topic for debate. Historically, European allies have been especially desirous of keeping a significant U.S. presence, which they view as supporting European stability and integration. Security guarantees to other allies have encouraged their support of non-proliferation regimes. Some critics, such as Philip H. Gordon at the Brookings Institution, fear that moving forces away from long term allies to basing in nations less likely to restrain U.S. military operations would give the Administration more latitude to take unilateral military action in future crises without consultation, thus further harming

relationships and the U.S. image.<sup>28</sup> Others have reinforced the concern that the moves could erode ties with traditional, long term American allies, with particular focus centered on the relationship with Germany. Some, such as Pat Towell at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, even suggested that the moves were intended as punishment of Germany by the Bush administration for its opposition to U.S. operations in Iraq.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, it bears recognition that land restrictions and real estate costs for some U.S. allies has led to limitations on training and exercises. Further, prudent U.S. relocations could reduce frictions with local populations, especially in Okinawa and South Korea.

Advocacy groups for military personnel and families echoed the report's warnings regarding the impact of the re-basing strategy on quality of life. Some, like Joyce Raezer of the National Military Family Association, suggested that DOD's record of preparation for past unit moves showed that services were not ready for families at new locations, and that services closed before old locations were empty. Likewise, they fear the strain on civilian infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and housing, could cause problems with the relocations. For example, as a new brigade recently assumed post at Fort Drum (Watertown NY), soldiers had to look up to 75 miles away for housing.<sup>30</sup> Such long commutes will strain soldiers on shift work or delay their response in a crisis. Scarce housing also could harm personnel's standard of living, particularly for families where both adults are active duty members, or single parent households. It could also drive up rent costs for junior enlisted members. It could also limit civilian spouse employment opportunities. Schools in Watertown also became overcrowded, and the single hospital in town lacked capacity for the new patients (Ft Drum has no base hospital). However, other larger communities, such as El Paso TX, have expressed enthusiasm for the job growth and homebuilding surge these moves would prompt.<sup>31</sup> The operational deployment tempo associated with combat in Iraq and Afghanistan already adversely pressures recruiting and retention.<sup>32</sup> The strains of re-basing and more frequent deployments and separations under the new strategy could emerge as another element which tips troops' decisions against joining or staying in the service.

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<sup>28</sup> Ronald Brownstein, "Turnabout on Troops Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Dave Moniz and Steven Komarow, "Pullback Could Alter Ties With Allies," *USA Today*, August 17, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon Trowbridge, "Unease on Family Front," *Marine Corps Times*, June 6, 2005, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Sappenfield, "A Rush to Make Room for Returning Troops," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 15, 2005, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Eric Schmitt, "Army Likely to Fall Short in Recruiting, General Says," *New York Times*, July 24, 2005, sect. 1, p. 18; Tom Bowman, "Military Struggles to Hold Strength," *Baltimore Sun*, August 14, 2005, p. 1A; Laura Bailey, "Corps Meets June Recruiting Goal; Contracting Status Is Still Unclear," *Marine Corps Times*, July 25, 2005, p. 10.

## Recent Developments

### Department of Defense

Other Department of Defense transformational programs that interact with the IGPBS continue to progress. On May 12, 2005, the Department of Defense released its submission to the BRAC Commission for bases to close or realign. During 24-27 August 2005, the BRAC Commission conducted their deliberations and finalized their determinations for the submission to the President, on September 8, 2005. The BRAC Commission reviewed Pentagon proposals to close or realign over 800 installations. Most of the DOD plan remained unchanged, with the Commission adopting 86% of the DOD's proposal. On September 15, 2005, the President forwarded the BRAC Commission recommendations to Congress for approval. Congress has not yet taken action on the BRAC plan, which will automatically become law after 45 days, unless Congress specifically acts to disapprove the plan.<sup>33</sup>

Regarding the key supporting documents for the IGPBS, the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) will continue through February 2006, while the Mobility Capabilities Study was completed at the end of July 2005, and is being briefed to senior leaders to gain final approval. To spur movement on the contentious QDR study, acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England recently directed Pentagon leadership to focus their analysis on three core missions: homeland defense, global war on terrorism, and conventional major warfare in order to streamline deliberations from more than 160 issues originally nominated for consideration. Solving the question of "enabler" forces, which include logistics and mobility functions, remains a point of contention and is a critical aspect of QDR linkage with the Global Posture Review. With regard to force structure, reports indicate that in order to free funds for a potential QDR call to increase Army and Marine forces for the war on terror, the Navy might drop from 11 to 10 carrier battle groups. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had proposed this idea as early as September 2004, but it would also seem to cut into the power projection and mobility concepts pivotal to the global re-basing strategy.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> David S. Cloud, "Panel on Base Closings Wraps Up Work," *New York Times*, August 28, 2005, sect. 1, p. 19; 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission, "BRAC Commission Delivers Final Recommendations to the President," press release, September 8, 2005, [[http://www.brac.gov/docs/PressRelease\\_8Sep2005.pdf](http://www.brac.gov/docs/PressRelease_8Sep2005.pdf)].

<sup>34</sup> Michael Bruno, "Mobility Capability Study Analysis Done, Under Review," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, July 29, 2005; "England Sets QDR Endgame; Giambastiani Joins Review," *InsideDefense.com Defense Alert*, August 16, 2005 at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Elaine M. Grossman, "Defense Leaders Put Final Touches on New Force-Planning Mechanism," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005, at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Elaine M. Grossman, "Army, Marine Corps Seen as Early Winners in Quadrennial Review," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 18, 2005, at [<http://www.insidedefense.com>]; Richard Mullen, "Rumsfeld Says Navy Can Operate With Fewer Carrier Groups," *Defense Today*, September 24, 2004, p. 1.

## International Arena

Recent international developments potentially cast shadows on key assumptions underlying the Global Posture Review. There might be indicators of an international shift in the degree of welcome extended by other countries to basing U.S. forces. For example, a statement by South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun would seem to place limits on the United States ability to employ forces stationed in Korea to missions beyond the peninsula.<sup>35</sup>

Of particular concern to the re-basing plan are recent developments in Uzbekistan. On July 29, 2005, the United States was formally notified that it had 180 days to leave its air base at Karshi-Khanabad, in Uzbekistan. This base has served as a vital hub for missions flown to support operations in Afghanistan, and was prototypical of the cooperative security locations envisioned in the Pentagon re-basing plan. One reason for this eviction might have been State Department pressure on the Tashkent government regarding recent human rights abuses.<sup>36</sup> Another reason for the eviction might have been encouragement from China and Russia, who have indicated increasing unease regarding U.S. military activity in the Central Asia region — a region seen by the United States as strategically vital to the war on terror. Commentators contend that Russia, and particularly China, are exploiting the perception of U.S. support for democratic revolutions in Georgia and the Ukraine as examples of a U.S. threat to the power of the area's authoritarian leaders, such as President Karimov in Uzbekistan. During the demonstrations that prompted the harsh Uzbek government response and attendant U.S. criticism, China publicly expressed support for Karimov's actions. Furthermore, shortly before the United States' eviction, Karimov visited Beijing, where he garnered \$1.5 billion in contracts and agreements between China and Uzbekistan.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, the political and security climate in some locations proposed for U.S. forward bases could require a disproportionate amount of manpower be dedicated to local security requirements. For example, while President Hamid Karzai has signaled a desire for a permanent U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, an upsurge of violence killed seven U.S. troops in a four day period in August 2005. This increase of attacks also wounded two embassy staffers, four years after the defeat of the Taliban.<sup>38</sup> Other countries reported to be under consideration for, or already hosting U.S. troops confront significant terrorist threats of their own. For example, the "Lord's Resistance Army" continues to stage brutal attacks in Uganda, with a limited cease-fire having failed at the beginning of the year. In Turkmenistan, a country under consideration to host the U.S. forces removed from Uzbekistan, government

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<sup>35</sup> "Roh Tells U.S. to Stay Out of Regional Affairs," *Washington Times*, March 11, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Robin Wright, Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. Evicted from Air Base in Uzbekistan," *Washington Post*, July 30, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Brown, "Uzbekistan Signals," *Washington Times*, August 14, 2005, p. B03.

<sup>38</sup> Halinma Kazem, "Karzai Hints at Permanent U.S. Military Basing," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2005; Jonathan S. Landay, "4 GIs Killed as Afghan Attacks Increase," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, August 22, 2005, p. A3.



crackdowns on terrorists have led to accusations of major violations of human rights and civil liberties curtailments.<sup>39</sup>

## Potential Oversight Issues for Congress

The Overseas Basing Commission pointedly emphasized the importance of Congressional oversight of the overseas basing realignment process. Some of the issues Congress may wish to consider include the following:

### Strategy

Does the IGPBS have adequate linkage to an overarching strategic framework agreed upon by all key government parties in the national security strategy process? Has the necessary, supporting analysis, including the Quadrennial Defense Review, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, and the Mobility Capabilities Study, properly accounted for the requirements of overseas basing realignment? Is now the right time to execute the proposed transformation, and is the proposed time line feasible?

### Cost

Are the Defense Department's cost projections for the overseas realignment accurate? Will projected savings outweigh the cost of realignment and associate systems procurement? Has the Department properly programmed for logistics and mobility assets to support the new strategy? Have other affected federal, state, and local government agencies adequately anticipated the services and infrastructure costs driven by the bed down of returning forces and their families to the United States?

### Operational Tempo

Is it feasible to conduct the basing realignment moves given the deployment tempo driven by ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan? Can the Services permanently sustain the long term pace of frequent deployments required by the strategy? What will be the impact of the realignment on military recruiting, retention, and the quality of life in the military?

### Diplomacy

What will be the effect of the re-basing on the relationship with long term U.S. allies, such as Germany, where a draw down is proposed? Have sufficient legal arrangements, such as status of forces agreements and overflight rights, been

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<sup>39</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004," at [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/c14818.htm>]; John T. Bennett, "DOD in Talks with South, West African Nations About Basing Rights," *Inside the Pentagon*, October 21, 2004; Interfax, "Transfer of US Base from Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan 'Possible,'" *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, August 29, 2005, [<http://global.factiva.com>].

negotiated in advance of the arrival of U.S. forces in new host nations? What guarantees does the U.S. have of freedom of military action from bases in the new locations? Do the political climates in the new host nations support U.S. values of democracy and human rights? Do the internal security environments in the proposed locations pose a threat to U.S. military personnel stationed there? Is the re-basing proposal affected by standing treaties to which the U.S. is a state party, such as the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty?<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE) places national and regional limits on troops and equipment that may be permanently stationed or temporarily deployed by member states. It also requires advanced notification of significant force movements. For further information, see CRS Report RL30033, "Arms Control and Nonproliferation Activities: A Catalog of Recent Events," by Amy F. Woolf, January 7, 2005.